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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 24, 2003.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

FINISHING THE JOB FOR AMERICAN SENIORS

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the 6 month mark for the 108th Congress, we can look back on our work with a great sense of accomplishment. Just in the last 3 weeks, the House has moved major legislation benefiting consumers, children, small businesses and working class parents. As important as these accomplishments have been, they are only part of a broader three-part agenda.

The Republican leadership of this Congress set three major objectives when we were sworn in.

We committed ourselves to do our part to support the war on terror, and through our work on the budget and the Operation Iraqi Freedom war supplemental, we have.

We committed ourselves to help get the economy started moving again, and since the House passed the President's Jobs and Growth Package, wealth has been created, losses recovered, consumer confidence has risen and jobless claims have fallen.

Finally, the Republican majority committed itself to work with the President to finally create a prescription drug benefit with Medicare.

American seniors have been waiting for Congress to act for years to finally make the Medicare program reflect 21st Century medical realities. We cannot wait on the sidelines while they are hurting financially and physically.

We must act, and this week we will. The House has twice before passed a prescription drug benefit, only to have it stalled along its way. But this time we are going to get it right and get a bill to the President's desk.

When we got here, our Nation faced three big problems: Terrorism, a sagging economy, and seniors being bankrupted by their prescription drug bills.

In response, we had three big ideas: Continuing our relentless war on terror, creating jobs and growing the economy, and adding a long overdue prescription drug benefit to Medicare.

This Republican Congress will not lose sight of the big picture, Mr. Speaker. For everything else we accomplish at the end of the day, we will be judged on how we meet these three challenges.

In the last 6 months, we have met the first two head on. It is time to do the same with the third. We have done a great deal so far, but it is time to finish the job.

MAKING AMERICA FISCALLY SECURE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about how much debt and how much of an increased tax there is going to be placed on my 10 grandchildren and everybody else's grandchildren and children. Let me just review what we have been doing on increased spending.

Discretionary increases have averaged 6.3 percent each year since 1996 and 7.7 percent each year since budget balance was reached in 1998. By this chart, you can see the red line where we have taken off on increased spending, not just keeping up with inflation, but 6.3 percent every year, which is two and three times the rate of inflation, and, in one year, four times the rate of inflation. How big can government get? How big do we want government to be?

This week we are considering a prescription drug program. The next chart, Mr. Speaker, shows what is going to happen to the total debt of this country. The blue line is the gross Federal debt. The debt held by the public is the green line.

Actually, we have two debts in this country. First, is the amount we borrow from Social Security. In 1983, we expanded the Social Security tax, increased the FICA tax, your payroll tax for Social Security, more than ever before in the history of the country and it is still going wrong. In fact, when we started Social Security, it was 1.5 percent of payroll, and now it is 12.4 percent of payroll. Seventy percent of American workers today pay more in their payroll tax than they do in the income tax. So we have been borrowing from Social Security right along, and

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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